DETERMINING AD TARGETING INFORMATION AND/OR AD CREATIVE INFORMATION USING PAST SEARCH QUERIES

§ 1. BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] § 1.1 Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention concerns advertising. In particular, the present invention concerns the targeted serving of ads.

[0003] § 1.2 Background Information

[0004] Advertising using traditional media, such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines, is well known. Recently, advertising over more interactive media has become popular. For example, as the number of people using the Internet has exploded, advertisers have come to appreciate media and services offered over the Internet as a potentially powerful way to advertise.

[0005] Website-based ads (also referred to as "Web ads") are often presented to their advertising audience in the form of "banner ads" (i.e., a rectangular box that includes graphic components). When a member of the advertising audience (referred to as a "viewer" or "user" in the Specification without loss of generality) selects one of these banner ads by clicking on it, embedded hypertext links typically direct the viewer to the advertiser's Website. The particular page to which the viewer is directed may be referred to as the "landing page" of the ad. Although the ad landing page may be a home page (e.g., a root of a Website), this is not necessary; it may be any page of a Website. The process where the viewer selects an ad is commonly referred to as a "clickthrough" ("Clickthrough" is intended to cover any user selection.).

[0006] Some search engines, such as Google for example, have enabled advertisers to target their ads so that they will be rendered with a search results page and so that they will be relevant, presumably, to the search query that prompted the search results page. Although search result pages afford advertisers a great opportunity to target their ads to a more receptive audience, they typically require advertisers to enter targeting information, such as keyword targeting information. For example, an ad may be considered relevant to a search results page and therefore eligible to be served with the search results page, if one or more of its targeting keywords match one or more terms from the search query. The Google ad system allows advertisers to target their ads in a one or more ways so that the ads will likely be relevant, and therefore useful, when served. For example, currently, advertisers may target ads using one of three keyword matching methods: exact; phrase; and broad. With exact matching, the query must be identical to keyword targeting criteria (i.e., one or more words or phrases used to make a targeting judgment (e.g., to determine whether an ad is relevant or not)). With phrase matching, the query must contain the targeting criteria words in the order specified by the phrase. Finally, with broad matching, the query must contain any one of one or more of the targeting criteria keywords, in any order. The advertiser may also define negative keywords such that if a search query includes a negative keyword, the ad will not be served.

[0007] From the perspective of the advertiser, the targeting keywords should generate a sufficient number of impressions, and should perform well (e.g., in terms of some metric such as clickthrough rate, conversion rate, etc.). If targeting keywords are subject to a competitive process, as is the case where advertisers make an offer (e.g., a bid, a maximum cost offer, etc.) for a keyword, many advertisers would appreciate finding targeting keywords that get impressions, perform well, but aren't so popular with other advertisers.

[0008] Some advertisers may find entering and/or maintaining keyword targeting information difficult, or at least tedious. Moreover, some advertisers may have trouble selecting the right keywords to obtain enough impressions and/or good performance for their ads. Thus, it would be useful to help advertisers by providing them with targeting information, such as targeting keywords for example.

[0009] The creative associated with an ad may also affect the performance of the ad. Some advertisers may find generating good ad creatives difficult. Thus, it would be useful to help advertisers by providing them with ad creative information, such as terms for inclusion in the content of the creative for example.

§ 2. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] The present invention may be used to determine ad targeting keywords for an advertiser. The present invention may do so by storing selected document information to query information associations, aggregating such associations, and, for an ad associated with a selected document, providing popular terms and/or phrases (hereafter referred to as "terms/phrases") also associated with the selected document as ad targeting keywords for the ad.

[0011] The present invention may be used to determine ad creative content for an advertiser. The present invention may do so by storing selected document information to query information associations, aggregating such associations, and, for an ad associated with a selected document, including at least one popular term/phrase also associated with the selected document in the content of a creative for the ad.

[0012] In at least one embodiment of the present invention, the ad may use the selected document as its landing page. In at least one embodiment of the present invention, the document may be a Web page and may be identified by a URL. In at least one embodiment of the present invention, the document may be a Website homepage.

§ 3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] FIG. 1 is a high-level diagram showing parties or entities that can interact with an advertising system.

[0014] FIG. 2 is a bubble chart of an exemplary advertising environment in which, or with which, the present invention may operate.

[0015] FIG. 3 illustrates an exemplary search engine with which at least some aspects of the present invention may be used.

[0016] FIG. 4 is a bubble chart illustrating operations that may be used with search operations to associate query terms with selected documents in a manner consistent with the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 5 is a flow diagram of an exemplary method that may be used to associate query terms with selected